



OHRID FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT FROM INCEPTION TO NOW

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Macedonia has been referred to as a mixed fruit salad by many countries since its early inception. The name stems from so many different ethnicities living in one region together. Macedonia has a total population of 2 million people. 64% are ethnic Macedonians, 25% Albanians, and the rest consist of Turks, Romani, Serb, etc. (Pardew, 2018). After many discussions, in 1993 Macedonia was finally admitted to the UN under the name Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, also known as FYROM. The name FYROM stemmed from the name conflict between Greece and Macedonia. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia will be voting in the next month to approve a new name for the country. The proposed name is for the country is Northern Macedonia. This name change will allow Macedonia (FYROM) to be recognized in NATO and hopefully gain admission into the European Union.

Macedonia has had many struggles in their short history as a nation. The Ohrid agreement was signed on August 13th, 2001. This document was essential in preventing a civil war in the region. Ethnic tensions between the Macedonian government and ethnic Albanians living in Macedonia started in 2001. Due to all of the recent US activity in the Balkans, the US was closely monitoring the conflict in Macedonia. The US did not want to enter into another war/conflict but wanted to ensure that their investment in region was protected (for example the recent conflict in Kosovo) (Pardew, 2018).

The tensions in Macedonia started in full force. Albanians demanded to be represented in national institutions such as the military and police. Macedonia did not recognize Albanians nor would they accept the Albanian language in any government entities. Albanians wanted to be educated in Macedonia using their ethnic tongue (Albanian). Albanians demanded that their ethnic language become recognized by the government. During these protests, the NLA (National Liberation Army) was created to fight with the government of Macedonia. Leader Ali Ahmeti and the NLA started to attack and fight the government. The NLA considered themselves as freedom fighters. They were small in numbers but staged attacks and were able to defeat Macedonians. The Macedonian government condemned the NLA and considered them as terrorists. As the tensions and fighting continued, the Macedonian government refused to negotiate with Ali Ahmeti or anyone that was a part of the NLA (Pardew, 2018).

The United States and NATO feared that a civil war between Macedonians and Albanians was about to break in full force. The Macedonian government tried to defeat the NLA but after repeated unsuccessful attempts, the NLA became larger and stronger. The United States stepped in to try and establish peace between both parties. The US sent in negotiators but failed at their attempts to settle the dispute due to negotiators speaking with NLA leaders. US Ambassador James Pardew and French Minister of Defense Francois Leotard was sent into negotiate a settlement between the two parties after the unsuccessful attempt by the first delegation. The US wanted both parties to agree on a peace settlement and then transfer the monitoring/agreement to their European allies (Pardew, 2018).

Creating a peace deal was extremely challenging, especially since negotiators could not speak with the NLA. It was essential that all parties would agree to the terms of the agreement and that a cease fire commence. After much deliberation and lives lost, a deal was finally agreed upon. Due to the excellent work by the negotiating team, a civil war was prevented and Albanians were given recognition by the government. The overall goal of the agreement was to resolve ethnic conflicts between the Albanian and Macedonian ethnic communities was achieved. More than a decade has passed since the signing of this agreement, and it is important to analyze to what degree the tenets of the agreement are in force today and what areas from the original agreement still need to be addressed in whole or part.

Nearly a decade after the Ohrid Framework Agreement was signed, the European Commission produced a document, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2010 Progress Report. This comprehensive report described the relations between the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the EU, analyzed the political and economic criteria for Macedonia to join the EU, and reviews Macedonia's capacity to handle the obligations of EU membership. The report then specifically analyzes 33 different areas, including law, energy, transportation, exter-

nal relations, social policy, justice, freedom and security.

Of the 33 different areas addressed, the report opined on several areas that are related to the Ohrid Framework, including Human Rights and protection of minorities. The report notes that there has been "limited progress in the promotion and enforcement of human rights". Civil and political rights were discussed in the report as well. In particular reform movements in the correctional and law enforcement areas show needs for improvement as measured by the number of complaints lodged against these agencies. The report shows some improvement in freedom of the press, allowing Albanian language media to reach citizens, but more work is needed to protect journalists from intimidation and government fines. The report also notes that improvement is needed related to the use of the Albanian language in government. The Framework indicated the need for resources for any language spoken by 20% of the population. The hiring of interpreters for the Albanian language has somewhat been addressed, but work is still needed in this area. The report also notes that further progress is needed in the areas of religious rights, women's rights and a specific need to address the rights and treatment of the LGBT community.

Several authors have noted that the tenets of the Ohrid Framework have not yet been fully implemented, and the tensions between the two major ethnic groups are still very much present (See Fouere, 2006; Ilievski & Taleski 2009; Ordanoski & Matovski 2007; Reka, 2007; Staniševski & Miller, 2009), thus the dream of a multiethnic and multicultural Macedonia is far from complete. External entities remain engaged in insuring that the tenets of the Ohrid Framework are implemented. Jovanovski (2010, April 27) reports that the European Union, NATO, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the US ambassadors in Macedonia issued a statement expressing concern about the separatist declarations by the local political leaders and other individuals, that contradict and abandon the Ohrid Framework Agreement. In this joint statement, the ambassadors asked the local political leaders to reaffirm their full commitment to the Ohrid Framework Agreement, redouble their commitment to inter-ethnic harmony, and refrain from any actions that could create interethnic tension.

In conclusion, the primary goal of the Ohrid Framework Agreement is to promote peaceful and harmonious development of the civil society, while respecting both the ethnic identity and the interest of the all citizens of Republic of Macedonia. To the country needs to implement the principles of multiculturalism and multi-ethnicity in every field of the social and the political life in accordance with the aspirations for European integration (Jovanovska & Stojmenov, 2010).

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